

Some Short Stories in the April Magazines

By DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH.

"ART is feeling passed through thought and fixed in form," said Miss Viola Rosboro recently, which furnishes a good standard by which to judge short stories. The worthy story, one that creates emotion in the reader, arises from genuine feeling on the part of the writer—not a false sentimentality, not a worked up enthusiasm, but a real and compelling impulse. So if a story lacks feeling it lacks power. Likewise a short story should be judged by its form, by the skill with which its various elements are unified to produce the final effect.

The magazine stories of this month may be called satisfactory rather than satisfying. They are interesting, they are technically correct, in the main, but they leave an ultimate hunger unappeased. Still, they are good—some of them—and it would be unfair to quarrel with them because they are not great.

Two Tales in "Harper's."

Beloved Husband, by Susan Glaspell, in *Harper's Magazine*, though slight as to plot, is admirable in its study of character, in its analysis of the slow and painful processes by which a man's mind is warped and his destiny determined. It has a mordant cynicism of circumstance, an ironic inevitableness that is artistic and convincing.

Jenkins, by Mary White Slater, also in *Harper's*, furnishes a pleasing contrast in material and effect to Miss Glaspell's story. It shows the romance of business in a big department store, and the upspringing of love amid prosaic surroundings. The story is pleasingly human, and the sentiment is handled with a cool restraint that saves it from the danger of mawkishness.

The Man Who Is Dead, by John Russell in *Collier's*, is decidedly one of the best stories of the month. The plot structure is excellent, with its natural use of the supernatural, its building up of suspense and its dramatic climax.

Butterfly Dust, by Fanny Kemble Johnson, in *the Century*, has something of the delicate fragility, the fugitive beauty of butterfly wings, in truth, yet a certain intensity and power as well. It also is a story of young love, of love that rises above the devastating force of fate, that wrests happiness from the seemingly impossible. This is not a war story, yet the suggested tragedy springs out of the conflict.

Eternal Youth, by Wilbur Daniel Steele, in *Scribner's Magazine*, is a curious study of personality, of a strange type of egoism as shown in the character of a man who fails to do a man's work in the world because he craves always the plaudits of undergraduates. The story is skilfully handled, yet lacks something to make it altogether convincing.

The Flowering Bush, by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, in the *Woman's Home Companion*, pleases one by its sincerity of feeling, its quiet realism of character drawing and its excellence of plot structure. This story seems like a return to Mrs. Freeman's earlier and better work.

A Study by Dreiser.

Free, by Theodore Dreiser, in the *Saturday Evening Post*, analyzes the emotions of a sixty-year-old husband during his wife's fatal illness. He feels that she has fettered him, thwarted his life, stultified his efforts, and that if he were but free of her, love, happiness, success would be his. But when she dies he looks in the mirror to realize that he is an old man, free only to die.

The story is interesting in its psychology, but far too long, and told with exasperating repetition. The plot texture is too slight to be stretched over so much space. But excessive length is the weak-

Stories by Eden Phillpotts



EDEN PHILLPOTTS
Author of "Chronicles of St. Tid."

EDEN PHILLPOTTS'S admirers will welcome the *Chronicles of St. Tid*, a collection of stories about the quarry town of St. Tid on the Cornwall down, with the background of the sea behind it. Quaint characters of the author's familiar portrayal are here again. The stories are slight in plot, most of them, and of various sorts, some grim, some gay, some gently sentimental. In them we meet the same people again and again. This knits the stories together until it seems to us

ness of the *Saturday Evening Post* stories in general.

Good Humor Here.

The Prize Package, by Christopher Morley, in *Collier's Weekly*, is a clever satire of a Rhodes scholar's attempts to break into literature and love in New York. Mr. Morley has delightful humor, but he could add more to the gaiety of the nation if he did not make such earnest efforts to be funny. The reader tires of his mental gymnastics, his trick performing words. One is continually thinking of Christopher Morley rather than of his characters.

Ruby Crosses the Rubicon, by Howard Brubaker, also in *Collier's*, has a spontaneous humor that can make the reader temporarily forget the woes of adult life. The theme is rather age worn, that of the interference of young brothers and sisters in the affairs of big sister and her beau, yet the style is charmingly fresh.

At the Back of God Speed, by Rupert Hughes, in *Harper's Magazine*, is a rollicking Irish story, with swift and accurate character drawing, comedy of character and of situation, and a sympathy that warms the heart.

The output of war stories this month is unusually large, but many of them seem machine made, arising out of the popular demand for war literature rather than from depth of feeling.

Jim Egan's Draft, by Jennette Lee, in *Every Week*, has perhaps more real power than any war story of the month. It deals with elemental human emotions, and the patriotism it describes has more sincerity of appeal than that shown by most of the others. It is natural and spon-

as if we had wintered and summered in St. Tid, among these Cornish men and women. It is impossible to single out particular stories as the best, but many readers will remember *The Reed Bond*, the story of a mother's supreme sacrifice; the droll gressomeness of *The Church Grim*, the sly humor of *The Dream* and *The Green Man*, and the way the war came to St. Tid in *A Touch of Fearfulness*.

CHRONICLES OF ST. TID. By EDEN PHILLPOTTS. The Macmillan Company. \$1.50.

taneous and touches the heart with its big simplicity.

Their Wan, by Hetty Hemenway, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, is admirable in its art and in its spiritual values. The characterization is good, for the various figures, the mother, the adolescent son whom she thought old enough to go to war and to die, yet not old enough to fall in love—the young girl, her mother—all stand out as in life.

The Tough Gun, by Edna Ferber, in the *Metropolitan*, is a spirited story showing the beneficent processes of war on one Buzz Werner. The psychological evolution is realistic, but the plot leaves too much to chance to be altogether effective.

The Dog of War, by Amy Landon Gur-litz, also in the *Metropolitan*, is a cheerful tale wherein war, love and the meddlesome energies of children furnish complications. The *Metropolitan* has no story this month that possesses the genuine feeling of that short, tense little story in the March issue, *Where Lovers Dream*.

The Unsent Letter, by Gouverneur Morris, in the *Cosmopolitan*, avoids the triteness of situation seen in many of the war stories. It reveals character, shows a twofold struggle and achieves a dramatic denouement, all in the space of four pages. The economy of treatment shown in this is in marked contrast to the prolixity of Fanny Hurst's war story in the same issue, *A Boob Spelled Backward*, where the story is lost in a welter of words, in interminable Jewish conversation.

Art must ever be more selective than life, and Miss Hurst limits the value of her work by her failure to use the blue pencil. She has rather a fixed little story formula that is becoming monotonous, with its philosophic introduction, its too great emphasis on dialogue as a revealer of character and the too slight attention to plot, together with a reliance on sentiment that at times is pronounced to the point of sentimentality.

"Letters to the Mother of a Soldier"

THERE have been books about the soldier over there and for the soldier over here. But *Letters to the Mother of a Soldier*, by Richardson Wright, is the real handbook for American mothers. It is a cheer book—the sort of book that makes your heart beat faster and your soul sing a special little hymn of contentment that our sons are going "over the top."

Mr. Wright is a writer of distinction. He has summed up the fears of the mother and cared for them in a satisfying manner. He grasps the world war situation as it develops in the mother heart, and while there is no attempt to gloss over the actual hardships, he finds that "khaki is a great leveller. Through it functions the splendid democracy of war. It dissolves prejudices and artificial social distinctions. It gives all men a rebirth, from which they start again free and equal."

And again, "To-day as I was going for my train traffic was blocked to let a regiment pass. It seemed a hideous waste to send such lads forth to battle. It seemed to be robbing them of so much of life—life full of opportunity, of sunshine and laughter. Yet, as they passed, I could not help saying to them, 'Young men, I hail you on the threshold of great careers!'"

There are so many good bits of consolation in real philosophy for the mother who sends forth her loved ones that one might quote indefinitely from this little book. But it is the sort of thing that mothers will want to have by them—these letters from a business man to his sister—from one who himself is swept finally into the vortex where "time has little to do with achievement, and life is valuable only according to the intensity with which it is lived."

LETTERS TO THE MOTHER OF A SOLDIER. BY RICHARDSON WRIGHT. Fredrick A. Stokes Company. \$1.25.

A second novel by Clemence Dane, *First the Blade*, described as "a comedy of growth," has led the publishers, the Macmillan Company, to record these facts about the author: She is an English woman barely out of her twenties, she was educated in England, Germany and Switzerland, her early interest was in painting, which she studied at The Slade and Dresden, she has been on the stage and has played not unsuccessfully many different kinds of parts. Her first novel was the *Regiment of Women*.



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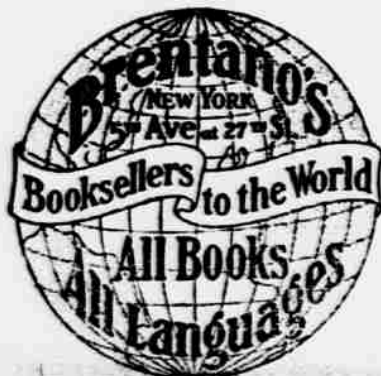
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